



DARK SOULS 5E

VERSION 0.2

CREDITS

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RUNNING A DARK SOULS CAMPAIGN

Dark Souls is a grim, dark (some may even say, grimdark) setting. Combat is lethal and the world is bleak. Capturing this in a D&D 5e game takes a special approach.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

Player characters in a Dark Souls setting are likely to all be members of the **cursed undead**.

CHARACTER CREATION

Running a Dark Souls campaign demands several considerations from the ground-up, starting with character creation.

Ability scores. Any form of ability score generation in the *Player's Handbook* can work well with a Dark Souls campaign. However, realize that point buy can lead to irritating min-maxing, and rolling for stats can create characters that are exceptionally skilled in this grim, deadly world.

Equipment. Standard equipment can make the early game a bit easier. You may consider only allowing a small selection of items to start with. Try not to limit defensive and offensive options too much. While Dark Souls is supposed to be difficult, purposely irritating your players won't lead to a fun campaign.

No matter how much extra wealth a character has at level 1, they cannot convert them to souls. Their wealth is actual gold and silver coins, worthless or not. If a character starting with 15 gp was allowed to convert that gold to souls, the campaign would start with them at level 3 before the game starts, avoiding the high lethality of the first two levels.

PLAYERS AND DEATH

The cursed undead are immune to death. There will be no rerolling characters here: death is a natural part of the Dark Souls experience. Death happens to all undead at some point or another, and can be of varying consequence. Losing money, souls, and equipment can be dire, but an important addition to death is the consequences of **hollowing**. Capturing how the descent into madness affects them is important for players to remember and for DMs to keep in mind. Rules for hollowing can be found further in this document.

The rules for the Darksign allow cursed undead to come back to life at the bonfire they last rested at. This can cause a party to split. It may be advisable to either disallow the decision entirely or make it available as a group decision.

LEVEL PROGRESSION

Unlike normal D&D, leveling in Dark Souls is handled by spending souls. Souls can be lost upon death, becoming irretrievable in many cases. Leveling can be thus be quite a bit slower in a Dark Souls D&D campaign. This is circumvented by giving souls as treasure in place of other wealth. After all, in Dark Souls, experience and wealth are one and the same.

NON-HUMAN RACES

Dark Souls normally only features humans. Some DMs may choose to simply limit player characters to humans. However, expanding your individual campaign's lore to include how other races are affected by the spreading of the undead curse can add a level of intrigue beyond the standard Dark Souls lore.

CREATING ADVENTURES

ENCOUNTER BUILDING

Dark Souls combat is brutal. Even the smallest creature can cause a quick death without proper care. As a DM, encounters should be usually built well into the "hard" threshold and beyond. Remember, death is a natural part of the Dark Souls experience.

DIFFICULTY

Many D&D campaigns focus on a steady progression toward fighting stronger and stronger creatures. Dark Souls does, as well, but having extra options when things go wrong is important. As a DM, you should focus on having three routes available whenever possible: an easy route, where combat is survivable with relative ease; a normal route, the most obvious one where combat is fairly challenging; and an advanced route, where combat's difficulty threshold is beyond what the player characters are normally expected to manage.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental hazards are also a big part of Souls games. Cliffs, pitfalls, poison swamps, fields of lava, spike-covered rotating bridges—these are all well-featured in Dark Souls. Players should feel that the environment is actively trying to harm them, like it's an enemy of its own.

TREASURE

In Dark Souls, gold and silver pieces are worth about as much as a rock of the same size. They are usually nothing more than oddities of a civilization that fell long ago.

When you would give coins and gems as treasure, instead give souls. In the undead lands, creatures of all

sorts hoard them for power or out of animalistic curiosity. 1 copper piece is equivalent to 1 soul. Magic items and equipment can be found as normal.

VARIANT RULES

This section contains optional rules that a DM can institute for a more “Dark Souls” feel, especially in combat.

DODGE ROLL

When using this variant rule, player characters with 13 or higher Dexterity automatically gain the Artful Dodger feat, detailed later in this document. A character who gains the feat in such a way can only benefit from it if their speed is not reduced due to encumbrance or from wearing armor.

POISE AND STAGGER

This variant rule attempts to emulate Dark Souls’ stagger and poise mechanics.

Poise. Each creature has an attribute called poise. A creature’s poise score is equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum 1). A creature in light armor increases its poise by 1, in medium armor increases its poise by 3, or in heavy armor increases its poise by 5. A creature wielding a shield increases its poise by 2. A Large or larger creature increases its poise by 5 for each size category it is above Medium. When not in armor, a monk gains extra poise

equal to his or her Wisdom modifier, and a barbarian gains extra poise equal to his or her rage damage bonus.

Stagger. When a creature is the target of an attack roll with a result of 10 or higher, its poise decreases by 2, whether the attack hits or not. When a creature’s poise is less than 0, it is staggered. Attack rolls against a staggered creature are made with advantage, and a staggered creature has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws. A creature’s poise resets to its normal score at the beginning of its turn.

SHIELD PARRY

This variant rule gives Dark Souls’ shield parrying a mechanical and flavorful effect.

When a creature attacks a target wielding a shield and misses, its attack is parried if its attack roll result was equal to or greater than the target’s AC without the shield. In plainer terms, if the attack roll is equal to the target’s AC - 2 or AC - 1, it is parried. A creature who uses the ability of the Defensive Duelist feat increases this range by an amount equal to its proficiency bonus.

When its attack is parried, a creature can’t take actions or reactions until the beginning of its next turn, and the first attack made against it is made with advantage.

THE WORLD OF DARK SOULS

This section contains rules and lore for playing and running a Dark Souls campaign.

THE END OF AN AGE

The world has turned and turned again, and the end of this age is nearing. For many years (how many none alive can say), the spreading of an undead curse has wracked civilization. Most have already fallen. Those that haven't soon will.

Cursed people are often locked away, out of civilization's eyes. This works for a time. Eventually the number of cursed grows too large, hollows begin spreading throughout the land, and violence breaks out both from and against them. Society becomes unstable, the nobles find themselves penniless and the poor are left hopeless. Despair spreads across the land as the gods, once seeming so near, abandon the mortals of this world.

It is not often that undead band together as you are. For survival, for glory, for rediscovering your past—no matter the reason, you are gifted beyond other undead, if only slightly. Other undead have drawn to you, as you have drawn to them. Perhaps you can survive in this world, and perhaps you are all destined for more? Is it possible that you can kindle the light of hope for this dying world?

LIFE IN A DYING WORLD

This section describes specific aspects of a Dark Souls-style campaign world. Aspects outside of the curse's effects are often quite vague in Dark Souls' lore. It is thus up to the DM to fill these gaps as they will.

BONFIRES

Flame, kindled by the souls of lords, sheds light in this darkening world. **Bonfires** serve as points of rest for wayward travelers.

FIRE KEEPERS

Bonfires are tended by **Fire Keepers**. These powerful beings feed the bonfires with souls and fuel for the sake of travelers.

Fire Keepers are almost always female humanoids and suffer from some disability or disfigurement. Some are mute, some blind or deaf, some suffer from chronic illness, and so on. They are immune to the curse of the undead and do not age so long as they stay at the bonfire.

If a Fire Keeper is killed, her bonfire goes dark. It is no longer a safe place to rest and can no longer be used as a normal bonfire can unless the Fire Keeper is restored to life or another Fire Keeper takes her place.

RESTING

Bonfires are safe places where travelers can rest. Those who rest around them sleep soundly and feel stronger much more quickly than usual. Dangerous hollows and monsters are driven away by the light of its flames unless they are actively pursuing you. You can complete a long or short rest at a bonfire in half the time it normally takes.

If you have an estus flask, you can refill it at a bonfire by holding it into the flame for 1 minute. The fire does not burn you. Estus collects in the flask from the flames.

THE CURSED UNDEAD

You have been cursed with the wretched **Darksign**. A tattoo-like mark draws in souls from the environment, burning at its edges. You have become one of the many cursed undead.

There is no cure for the Darksign. The might of clerics and gods have failed to cure it. Mighty mages have dedicated their lives to its removal, all for naught. It has persisted and spread through unknown means, appearing on humanoids and animals at random, as the world becomes filled with the ever-mad hollows.

Despite being known as "cursed undead," those cursed by the Darksign are not considered undead for the purpose of effects that specify them.

HOLLOWING

As a cursed undead, you cannot truly die. When you die, you return to life 1d4 hours later, so long as your body is mostly intact. All your hit points are restored, but diseases, poisons, and curses you were previously affected by still persist as normal. When you rise after death, you can choose to rise where you fell or at the last bonfire you rested at. If you choose to rise at a bonfire, your body and equipment vanish into ash and reappear around the bonfire.

With each death a part of your old self is lost, and you slowly descend into madness, becoming a hollow, empty shell. Your body also begins to decay, your flesh shriveling and rotting the more you die. While your body is decayed as such, you have disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks and advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks. A decaying body does not age.

When you rise after death, make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, you gain one long-term madness effect. When the effect would end, you must repeat the saving throw. On a failed save, it persists for another 1d10 x 10 hours. If you fail the initial save by 5 or more, you gain one indefinite madness effect. The DC for this save increases by 1 each time you die. The tables for

these effects can be found on page 260 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

These madness effects are usually accompanied by some memory loss. An important childhood memory may no longer exist for you, save for an itching feeling of *déjà vu*. You may forget one of your closest friends or family, or have their memory twisted into something terrible and traumatic.

In dire circumstances, you can sacrifice the souls you hold to return to a bonfire by touching your Darksign and concentrating as an action. You and your equipment, but not your collected souls, are transported back to the bonfire at which you last rested.

THE POWER OF SOULS

You can stave off hollowing by collecting **souls**. Each time a creature dies at your hand, either solely or in part, you absorb some of their eternal essence through your Darksign. As an undead, experience points (XP) you gain are instead collected as these souls. Some monsters may also drop larger souls they have collected, making the actual XP you gain from each creature more variable.

At a bonfire, you can spend souls by feeding them to your Darksign, staving off or reversing hollowing. By spending 100 souls, you can end one long-term madness effect you gained from hollowing, or you can suppress one indefinite madness effect for 24 hours. By spending 500 souls, you can end one indefinite madness effect affecting you, undo the rotting of your body from dying, or lower the saving throw DC for your next hollowing by 1, to a minimum of 10.

Souls can also be used to empower yourself, not just prevent the madness of your curse. At a bonfire, you can spend souls equal to the XP difference between your current and next level to gain a level.

You can give souls to someone else like you would an item, handing them over in various sizes of nearly-weightless balls of white smoke. In the lands of the cursed undead, souls serve as currency. The base “unit” of one soul is equal to one copper coin. This also allows souls on your person to be taken by other creatures, like any other item. If you are defeated by an enemy who knows of the power of souls, dying will likely leave you soulless and penniless.

MAGIC AND SPELLCASTING

Magic was, in some places, treated as a high art in some countries. Now, it has retreated once again to the realms of the arcane, mysterious and feared.

SORCERIES

These spells draw from the power of the soul to manipulate reality. Students of the great colleges of the world that was

now wander the world, slowly becoming hollow as their search for knowledge drives them insane.

MIRACLES

This divine magic is used to heal and conjure the power of lightning. It is the favored tool of the gods and high lords. Some arcane casters are capable of casting miracles, but they are often seen as cheap fakes.

PYROMANCIES

This chaotic art calls upon the raw power of nature. Many spells that deal or involve elemental damage are considered pyromancies. Pyromancy is seen as barbaric and crude to many, but its power is undeniable.

HEXES

Hexes draw on a power far darker and deeper than that of other magic: the power of Dark. The Dark dwells within the depths of the human soul, the stark opposite to the fire and light that led the world in the last age. It is feared and talked of only in hushed whispered, often seen as occult. Necromancy spells are usually hexes.

MATERIAL COMPONENTS

Expensive material components are exceptionally rare, if they are available at all. DMs may elect to allow spellcasters to spend souls to cast spells in place of expensive material components. Spending 1 soul is equivalent to 1 gp of an expensive material component's value. Unlike normal components, souls are always consumed when used to cast spells in such a way.

ESTUS

Estus is the essence of the souls of lords that kindles the flames at bonfires. Special flasks of thick glass, known as **estus flasks**, can hold this essence in small amounts. These flasks are very rare, as hollows often break them in anger once they're empty.

As an action, a creature can drink from an estus flask and expend a hit die. The creature rolls the hit die and adds its Constitution score, regaining hit points equal to the result. An estus flask can be used 5 times before it must be refilled at a bonfire. Fire Keepers can reinforce estus flasks to restore more hit points or hold more doses, though they often require powerful souls or the remains of righteous beings to do so.

Not all cursed undead have access to estus flasks. Whether or not a party receives one for each member, or one for the entire party, or none at all, is up to the DM.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD

POISON SWAMPS

Poison swamps can be found in accursed areas. For each minute you spend walking through muck or each round spent swimming through water in a poison swamp, you take 1d8 poison damage. This muck and water soaks through clothes and boots and blisters the skin; there is no way to avoid it, save for avoiding the muck and water altogether.

CURSES

CURSE OF STONE PESTILENCE

This terrible curse is caused by the mysterious basilisk. A creature afflicted with this curse has its hit points maximum cut in half. This curse lasts until it is removed, such as with *remove curse*.

TITANITE

Titanite is a rare ore, said to be the remains of a dead god of smithing. A creature with access to smith's tools that it is proficient with can use titanite to imbue weapons and armor with great power.

TITANITE SHARD

Uncommon

Normal titanite is black and shiny, sometimes hard to distinguish from dark rock, and usually only found in small, sharp shards. A single titanite shard can be used to enhance a non-magical weapon, armor, holy symbol, arcane focus, or shield by someone with proficiency with blacksmith's tools. Eight hours of dedicated work are required per titanite shard to enhance a piece of equipment.

A **titanite weapon** adds 1 to its damage rolls and can be enhanced by special forms of titanite. One titanite shard is required to enhance a weapon in this way. For each extra titanite shard used to enhance a titanite weapon, this bonus increases by 1, to a maximum of 7.

A **titanite shield** increases the wielder's AC by 1 more than normal. Three titanite shards are required to enhance a shield. A titanite shield cannot be further enhanced.

Titanite armor increases the wielder's AC by 1 more than normal. Three titanite shards are required to enhance a suit of armor. Titanite armor cannot be further enhanced.

A **titanite arcane focus** or **titanite holy symbol** increases the wielder's spellcasting save DC. For every two shards used to enhance this focus, the wielder's spellcasting save DC increases by 1, to a maximum bonus

of 3. This bonus is also added to the caster's spell attack rolls.

BLUE TITANITE

Rare

This chunk of special titanite is a deep blue color. A titanite weapon enhanced by blue titanite deals magical damage for the purpose of resistance and immunity. Eight hours of dedicated work are required to enhance a weapon in this way. A weapon can only be enhanced in this way once.

RED TITANITE

Rare

This chunk of special titanite looks like blood-soaked stone from a distance. A titanite weapon enhanced with a chunk of red titanite deals an extra 1d4 points of fire damage with each hit. Eight hours of dedicated work are required to enhance a weapon in this way. A weapon can only be enhanced in this way once.

WHITE TITANITE

Rare

This chunk of white titanite glows with holy light. A titanite weapon enhanced with a chunk of white titanite deals an extra 1d4 points of radiant damage with each hit. If the target is undead, it takes a further 1d4 points of radiant damage. Eight hours of dedicated work are required to enhance a weapon in this way. A weapon can only be enhanced in this way once.

CLASSES

Like any setting, each D&D class has its role to play in the grand scheme of the world.

BARBARIANS

The wilds of the world have always been filled with the uncivilized and hectic. They, too, are affected by the curse of the undead, with those branded by it chased off into the wilderness. Barbarians call on an inner strength to survive, their hollowing feeding into the power of their rage. While barbarians may die less than others, their rage makes them more prone to the madness of undeath.

BARDS

Minstrels often pick up sorceries and miracles alike, especially as the world becomes filled with hollows and ever-more dangerous. Craftiness and charisma can only get one so far, as one's speech becomes less important. A bard's versatility allows them to get by, but for how long?

CLERICS

The might of lords defined the last age. Their followers are now left stranded and alone, with little divine help to call

upon. Clerics may not receive their power from a god at all anymore, instead guided by their faith and ideals. This conflict of faith and hopelessness can lead many clerics astray, while their piety in the face of the curse leaves many hating the cleric with abandon.

DRUIDS

While the Darksign largely affects only humanoids, many animals become twisted undead, as well. Druids may be driven from the wilderness by roving undead. Nature is falling apart, yet druids continue to nurture it in what little way they can, trying desperately to wait out this dire age.

FIGHTERS

Great kingdoms continually fall as the Age of Dark deepens. Their greatest soldiers are left with nothing to defend, but their skills keep them alive in the face of madness. Only the most skilled fighters can face off such hordes, fighting off beasts and demons and undead to eke out a living.

MONKS

The monks of Dark Souls came together to fight the curse through meditation and ritual. Few monk schools still exist, those of the past broken by madness and superstition. Many monks that travel the lands either seek to share their enlightened teachings with others or have long-since realized that the teachings do nothing to combat the curse.

PALADINS

Chivalry is long-dead, murdered by the curse. Some, however, have managed to focus the madness of hollowing on sacred oaths, passed down by covenants of knights who seek to uphold good and righteousness in the era of growing darkness. Paladins gain power through this dedication and stave off the growing madness through will alone.

Of note is the covenant of the Sunlight Warriors, who seek to spread light wherever they can. They happily participate in teamwork, wielding sword, shield, and miracle to combat the insane hollows and twisted creatures of the world.

RANGERS

In the last days of the great kingdoms, people skilled in the hunting undead found a well-paying niche. By tracking down the curse, they helped the ruling class maintain a semblance of stability. Now that those nations have fallen, rangers are left to use their skills to survive.

ROGUES

While many fall in the dark times, some thrive. Cutthroats and bandits can make an easy living picking souls from the dead and weak. Rogues like Greirat and the cleric-hating Patches speak with silvered tongues, tricking people to their dooms and delving into lost ruins for goods. Some rogues hail from a higher calling, royal assassins that killed detractors in the last days of dying kingdoms.

SORCERERS

Sorcerers often wield pyromancies, the most ancient and primal magics. They wield the power of fire, drawn from within or from the environment.

Most sorcerers hail from the Great Swamp, where their attunement to nature can unlock even greater secrets.

WARLOCKS

There are vast powers beyond the dying world, and they too desire souls. Warlocks sacrifice their souls and their sanity for the sake of power and magical secrets, trying to find a cure to the curse. Many end up even more mad than their fellow undead, hollowed yet still yearning for knowledge.

WIZARDS

Sorcery schools were once bastions of knowledge. Be it the ancient school of Vinheim or the Grand Archives of Lothric, mages of all ages came together to research the power of magic and souls. Those schools collapsed many ages ago, leaving only the mad to research in never-ending circles.

Some students managed to escape, facing the world with what little knowledge they had. With experience comes greater knowledge and more powerful sorceries, helping wizards survive the age of fading fire. Many wizards, however, fall prey to the mad search for knowledge, going hollow as their obsession grows.

BESTIARY

Below is a collection of Dark Souls enemies tailored into 5e stat blocks.

ARMORED TUSK

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 42 (5d10 + 15)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)	7 (-2)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities lightning
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite
Senses passive Perception 8
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Charge. If the armored tusks moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Tusk. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Someone put this giant boar in spikey plate armor. What a world.

BASILISK

Medium aberration, unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 18 (4d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Skills Perception +2
Condition Immunities petrified
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Standing Leap. A basilisk's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage. Whether it hits or not, the target's space becomes filled with smoke-like gas until the

end of the basilisk's next turn. This gas otherwise follows the same rules as that from the basilisk's Cursed Gas ability.

Cursed Gas (Recharge 5–6). The basilisk spews gas at a point it can see within 30 feet of it. A 10 foot radius sphere around the point becomes heavily obscured for 1 minute. A creature that ends its turn in the area must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be petrified for 1 minute. If the creature fails the saving throw while already petrified, the creature dies and becomes afflicted with the Curse of Stone Pestilence. Until the curse is removed via *remove curse* or a similar effect, the creature's hit point maximum is halved.

These creatures look like giant salamanders with huge, cartoonish eyes. These eyes are merely a distraction, largely nonfunctional, to scare away predators. What use they have for scaring away predators is unknown, as their very breath can turn even the strongest of warriors to stone.

BLACK KNIGHT

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)
Hit Points 107 ()
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)

Damage Resistances fire
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Iconic Weaponry. A black knight wields one of three iconic weapons: a greatsword, a greataxe, or a halberd. These weapons are incredibly heavy yet wielded by the knight in one hand.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The knight makes three greatsword attacks, two greataxe attacks, or two halberd attacks. Alternatively, it makes one melee attack and one shield bash attack.

Greatsword (Greatsword Version Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Greataxe (Greataxe Version Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d12 + 5) slashing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Halberd (Halberd Version Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage.

Halberd Spin (Halberd Version Only). Each creature within 10 feet of the knight must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage.

Shield Bash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

BLUE DRAKE

Large dragon, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 93 (0)

Speed 20 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (–3)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)

Skills perception +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., on creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Lightning Breath (Recharge 5–6). The drake exhales lightning in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

CRYSTAL GOLEM

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 35 (4d10 + 56)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	9 (–1)	18 (+4)	3 (–4)	10 (+0)	1 (–5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., on target. *Hit:* 16 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Crystal Blast (Recharge 5–6). The golem slams its hands to the ground. The ground within 10 feet of it explodes with crystal formations. Each creature other than the golem in this area must make DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 18 (4d8) piercing damage. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage.

DEMONS

A great fire burns beneath earth. A failed experiment to save this world unleashed fell beasts upon it, dooming it further.

TAURUS DEMON

Huge fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 126 (18d12 + 27)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	6 (–2)	9 (–1)	9 (–1)

Damage Resistances fire

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Abyssal

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

ACTIONS

Demon's Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (3d12 + 4) slashing damage. On a hit, the target must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Giant Swing. Creatures within 10 feet of the demon must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage, be knocked back 15 feet, and fall prone.

Taurus Demons are rare creatures from deep below the surface. They wield massive, decrepit greataxes and swing them with terrifying power. They are known to create nests in the thoroughfares of ruined keeps and castles, attacking any hollow unfortunate enough to pass through their territory.

DEMON'S GREATAXE

The Taurus Demon's greataxe can be wielded by Medium humanoids with a Strength score of 18 or higher. It deals 3d12 damage, but creatures that wield it cannot make more than one attack with it per round and cannot make opportunity attacks with it. A Large or smaller creature hit with the Demon's Greataxe must make a DC 14 Strength

saving throw or be knocked prone. It is otherwise functionally identical to a normal greataxe.

CAPRA DEMON

Large demon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 75 (hit dice)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Abyssal
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The demon makes two great machete attacks.

Great Machete. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Double Swing. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (6d6 + 4) slashing damage, and the target must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

PROWLING DEMON

Large fiend, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 70 (hit dice)
Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)

Damage Resistances fire, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this range), passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 5 (XP)

Trait Name. Trait details.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The demon makes two attacks with its staff.

Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Prowling Leap (recharge 5–6). The prowling demon jumps into the air, moving up to 30 feet in a straight line. Any creature in its space or within 5 feet of it when it lands must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage

and be knocked prone. Creatures in its space are moved 5 feet to the nearest unoccupied space.

Lightning Blast. *Ranged Attack:* +5 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 24 (4d8) lightning damage.

HOLLOWS

The cursed undead are functionally immortal, but their curse drains them of goodness and sanity.

CURSED UNDEAD TEMPLATE

Add the following feature to a creature who becomes cursed by the Darksign.

Darksign. When this creature dies but its body is not destroyed, it comes back to life 1d4 hours later.

If the creature had suffered from the curse for long enough or died enough times, it becomes chaotic and evil. It also gains the following feature.

Hollowed. This creature has advantage on saving throws to resist being charmed or frightened.

Weaker members of the cursed undead usually have lower Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores compared to their uncursed counterparts. This does not affect their Challenge Rating.

HOLLOW

Medium humanoid (any race), chaotic evil

Armor Class 9
Hit Points 7 (1d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	9 (-1)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)	9 (-1)	8 (+1)

Senses passive Perception 9
Languages any one language (usually Common) but doesn't speak
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Darksign. When this creature dies but its body is not destroyed, it comes back to life 1d4 hours later.

Hollowed. This creature has advantage on saving throws to resist being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

Flail. This creature makes three melee attacks and its speed becomes 0 until the beginning of its next turn. Attacks against the creature are made with advantage until the start of its next turn.

Hollows are little more than common folk cursed by the Darksign. They have died many times over and are little more than empty shells. They lash out at creatures who come near them and disturb them, though they will sometimes gather in large groups, taking solace in their shared despair.

HOLLOW WARRIOR

Medium humanoid (any race), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	9 (-1)	8 (+1)

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages any one language (usually Common) but doesn't speak

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Darksign. When this creature dies but its body is not destroyed, it comes back to life 1d4 hours later.

Hollowed. This creature has advantage on saving throws to resist being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5ft. or range 20/60ft, one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

HOLLOW SOLDIER

Medium humanoid (any race), chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (breast plate, shield)

Hit Points 32 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common) but doesn't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Darksign. When this creature dies but its body is not destroyed, it comes back to life 1d4 hours later.

Hollowed. This creature has advantage on saving throws to resist being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The soldier adds 2 to its AC against a melee weapon attack against it from a creature it can see.

SKELETONS

Necromancy has run rampant since the spreading of the curse. Even before them, the first of the dead gave rise to countless animated skeletons, giving those who served him in life an eternal place by his side.

BONE TOWER

Large undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 50 (6d10 + 12)

Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	8 (-1)	3 (-4)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this range), passive Perception 9

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Tower of Death. The bone tower flails its many arms and legs around. A creature that starts its turn or enters a space within 5 feet of it for the first time on its turn must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage. This effect lasts until the start of the bone tower's next turn.

The Tower Falls. The bone tower can fling itself forward to the ground to smash creatures flat. Each creature in a 10 foot cube originating from the tower must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a success, the creature is pushed up to 5 feet and out of the area. On a failed save or if the creature cannot be pushed out of the area, it falls prone and take 16 (4d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage. The bone tower then falls prone, and its speed is reduced to 0 until the start of its next turn.

GIANT SKELETON

Large undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d10 + 18)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 9
Languages understands Common but can't speak
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (4d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 4) bludgeoning damage, target must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw or fall prone.

SKELETON WHEEL

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages understands languages it knew in life but can't speak
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Charge. If the skeleton moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a melee weapon attack, the target takes an extra 10 (4d4) slashing damage and must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is knocked prone.

Wheelby. The skeleton doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it moves out of an enemy's reach.

ACTIONS

Spin. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

SERPENT MAGE

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 47 (hit dice)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Damage Resistances lightning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Draconic
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The serpent makes three melee attacks.

Flamberge. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Lightning Orb (Recharge 4–6). *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) lightning damage.

SERPENT WARRIOR

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (shield)
Hit Points 66 (hit dice)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +3
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Draconic
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The serpent makes two melee attacks. Only one of these attacks can be a bite.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage, and if the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 13).

CHARACTER OPTIONS

This section contains new character options such as feats that players can choose from when playing in a Dark Souls campaign.

BACKGROUNDS

Below is a number of background options that players can choose from alongside the normal backgrounds in the *Player's Handbook*. The rules for customizing backgrounds apply as normal.

HOLLOWED

You can choose to take this alongside your other background features. The curse has left you ragged and half-mad. You gain one indefinite madness effect from the Indefinite Madness table.

KIN OF THE UNDEAD

You can replace your normal background feature with this. Hollows accept you as one of their kin. Hostile hollows are indifferent to you, and otherwise-indifferent hollows are friendly to you. Some hollows may be too far gone to

recognize you as a hollow yourself, but most will leave you alone or offer aid.

FEATS

Below is a selection of feats players can take to give their characters a more authentic Dark Souls feel.

ARTFUL DODGER

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13 or higher

When you are the target of an attack or an effect that forces you to make a Dexterity saving throw, you can use your reaction to move 5 feet without provoking opportunity attacks. If you move away from an attack, its attack roll is made with disadvantage. If you move away from a Dexterity saving throw created by an area of effect, you move before the area's effects take place. If the Dexterity saving throw was not created by an area of effect, you instead make the saving throw with advantage.

SPELLS

SPELL LISTS

The following spells can be made available to players in a Dark Souls-style campaign.

BARD

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

Hush (illusion)

3RD LEVEL

Homeward (abjuration)

CLERIC

1ST LEVEL

Dark orb (necromancy)

Homeward (abjuration)

Lightning spear (evocation)

2ND LEVEL

Dark weapon (necromancy)

Dead again (necromancy)

5TH LEVEL

Wrath of the Gods (evocation)

DRUID

1ST LEVEL

Homeward (abjuration)

Lightning spear (evocation)

PALADIN

1ST LEVEL

Lightning spear (evocation)

SORCERER

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

Hush (illusion)

3RD LEVEL

Homing soul mass (evocation)

Soul spear (evocation)

WARLOCK

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

Hush (illusion)

1ST LEVEL

Dark orb (necromancy)

2ND LEVEL

Dark weapon (necromancy)

Lifedrain patch (necromancy)

3RD LEVEL

Homing soul mass (evocation)

Soul spear (evocation)

WIZARD

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

Hush (illusion)

1ST LEVEL

Dark orb (necromancy)

3RD LEVEL

Homing soul mass (evocation)

Soul spear (evocation)

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

The spells are presented in alphabetical order.

DARK ORB

1st-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 90 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You send a heavy orb of darkness. Make a ranged spell attack against a creature within range. On a hit, the creature takes 2d6 necrotic damage. The creature must then make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is incapacitated until the end of its next turn.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

DARK WEAPON

2nd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You imbue a weapon you can touch with dark energy. For the spell's duration, that weapon deals an extra 2d4 necrotic damage with each hit.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d4 for each slot above 2nd.

DEAD AGAIN

2nd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Instantaneous

Each humanoid corpse within range explodes with dark energy. Each creature except you within 5 feet of such a corpse must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 2d6 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the radius of each explosion increases to 10 feet. The damage increases by 1d6 for each spell slot above 2nd.

HOMeward

3rd-level abjuration (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: 5 feet

Components: V, S, M (bone dust of a hollow)

Duration: Instantaneous

You and all willing creatures within range during the casting of this spell are teleported to the location at which you finished your last long rest.

HOMING SOUL MASS

3rd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You create five bright-blue souls that float above your head for the duration. When you cast the spell, and as a bonus action on each of your turns thereafter, you can expend one or two of the masses, sending it at a creature within 120 feet of you. For each mass that targets it, a creature must make a Dexterity saving throw or take 2d8 force damage.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the number of masses you create increases by two for each slot above 3rd level.

HUSH

Illusion cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 15 feet

Components: S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Choose one creature within range. For the spell's duration, the creature does not produce any noise from walking, running, flying, or swimming.

As you level up, you can target more creatures with this spell. You can target up to two creatures at 5th level, four at 11th level, and eight at 17th level.

LIFE-DRAIN PATCH

2nd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You create a 10-foot-radius patch of darkness centered on a point within range. For the spell's duration, that area is difficult terrain. Any creature that enters that area for the first time on its turn or starts its turn there must make a Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 2d6 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. You regain hit points equal to half the damage dealt.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each spell slot above 2nd.

LIGHTNING SPEAR

1st-level evocation

Casting Time: action

Range: 90 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You conjure a bolt of lightning. Make a ranged spell attack against a creature within range. On a hit, the creature takes 3d8 lightning damage.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 1st.

SOUL SPEAR

3rd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (100-foot line)

Components: V, S, M (a small crystal shard)

Duration: Instantaneous

A great soul spear pierces your enemies in a line 100 feet long and 5 feet wide in a direction you choose. Each creature in the line must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 8d6 force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 3rd.

successful save. If a creature fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is also knocked prone.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 5th.

WRATH OF THE GODS

5th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You create a burst of force around you. Each creature within 10 feet of you, other than yourself, must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 8d8 thunder damage and is pushed back 15 feet away from you, or takes half as much damage on a

MISCELLANEOUS BACK PAGE

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